

PRAYER TECHNIQUES

PRAYER WRITING

*Taken from the book "You Can Pray" of P. Ribes, s.j.
published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakas.*

Note:

Prayer techniques, properly speaking, are not prayer methods, but practical devices to help us either to pray alone or to help people to pray in a group.

Introduction

- ✓ *This prayer technique helps us to pin down our attention and to express openly the thoughts and feelings that may surface in our consciousness.*
- ✓ *It can be used along with any other prayer method or else as a sort of free wheeling prayer.*

Preparation:

Keep paper and pen or ball-pen ready. *(It is recommended to keep a prayer journal).*

Methodology: Use any of the Two Methods Mentioned below:

First Method. Spontaneous and Impulsive Writing.

- Quiet down. Relax. Relaxation and/or breathing exercises may help
- Place yourself in the presences of God. Stay in silence for a while
- Invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit.
- Get in touch with your thoughts and feelings.
- **Then, spontaneously and impulsively start writing in prayer form - directed God The Father or to Jesus or to Our Lady - your thoughts, feelings, ideas, reflections, recent experiences, moods, etc. as they emerge from within you.**
- Do not think. Allow your heart and mind full freedom to express whatever surfaces from your conscious or unconscious self
- Be honest to God and to yourself. You may express even negative feelings towards God. He knows what and how you feel. You cannot hide anything from Him!
- After you expressed to God whatever you thought and felt, take your pen again and write down what you guess God would respond to you. Write it – as far as possible – in the first person. *(As if God would be directly speaking to you)*
- Once you finished writing your 'prayer- communication', thoughtfully and devoutly read it over and over again.
- Now, verbally -not in writing- pray, speak, talk with God about what you wrote to Him and about what He responded to you. Don't be in a hurry to finish. .
- When you feel satisfied, close your prayer by saying "The Our Father", and reciting or singing an appropriate hymn.

Note: After finishing your prayer, keep your jottings with you. Later on, when you go over them, I am sure, you will learn in them much about prayer, about God and about yourself.

Second Method. Reflective Prayer Writing. Not on an Impulse.

- Decide before hand the subject matter you want to pray upon.
- Quiet down. Relax. Relaxation and/or breathing exercises may help
- Place yourself in the presences of God. Stay in silence for a while
- Invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit.
- Then, following any method of prayer, e.g. praying with the Bible, praying with sacred objects or images, on religious hymns, on traditional prayers, on prayers of reminiscence, or an examination of conscience, etc plunge into prayer, only that instead of thinking or reflecting silently within yourself, put your thoughts, ideas and reflections, and your feelings in writing.
- Take your time. Do not be in hurry to finish. (*Remember, it is not the quantity of things you meditate on that counts, but the quality and depth of your communication with God*)
- End your prayer exercise with a **“colloquy” - namely, a very intimate and personal conversation with God.** - Put it down in writing also.
- Once you finished your writing-prayer, slowly and thoughtfully, in the presence of God keep reading, over and over again, what you have written, ruminant over it until you feel satisfied.
- Recite “The Our Father” and read or sing an appropriate Hymn.

Note: After finishing your prayer, do not destroy what you wrote. Later on when you go over it, you will find treasures.